

# Fourth Plain Bus Rapid Transit

## Vancouver, Washington

### Small Starts Project Development

(Rating Assigned November 2014)

Summary Description	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Bus Rapid Transit 5.9 Miles, 18 Stations
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$53.00 Million
<b>Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$38.40 Million (72.5%)
<b>Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2016):</b>	\$3.19 Million
<b>Current Year Ridership Forecast (2013):</b>	5,700 Daily Linked Trips 1,802,100 Annual Linked Trips
<b>Overall Project Rating:</b>	Medium-High
<b>Project Justification Rating:</b>	Medium-High
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating:</b>	Medium

**Project Description:** The Clark County Public Transit Benefit Area Authority (C-TRAN) proposes to construct the first bus rapid transit (BRT) line in the Vancouver/Portland region as well as the first BRT line in the Clark County High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Plan. The BRT line would operate in mixed traffic for 5.9 miles. It would include the purchase of 10 new vehicles. The BRT line would operate every 10 minutes during weekday peak periods, every 15 minutes during weekday off-peak periods and daytime hours on weekends, and every 30 minutes in weekday and weekend evenings.

**Project Purpose:** Bus travel time in the project corridor has increased by 50 percent since 1992 as a result of increased traffic congestion and transit ridership. Over 33 percent of current bus service in the project corridor is at least five minutes late at key stops. Currently, Routes 4 and 44 are at capacity during high ridership times. The project would reduce transit travel time and improve trip reliability via a new exclusive BRT lane. The project would support local land use and transportation plans by encouraging development in and around activity centers such as Downtown Vancouver, the Columbia River Waterfront Revitalization Area, Fort Vancouver (a national historic park), Clark College, and Westfield Vancouver Mall.

**Project Development History, Status and Next Steps:** A planning study was initiated by C-TRAN for the corridor in June 2011, which was completed with the selection of BRT as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in June 2012. The LPA was adopted into the region's fiscally constrained long-range plan in August 2012. FTA approved the project into Small Starts Project Development in April 2013. The project was determined to be a Documented Categorical Exclusion in November 2014, completing the environmental review process. C-TRAN anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement and initiation of construction in early 2015, and the start of revenue service in November 2016.

## Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$38.40	72.5%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds)	\$4.00	7.5%
<b>State:</b>		
Regional Mobility Grant	\$3.00	5.7%
<b>Local:</b>		
C-TRAN Capital Reserve	\$7.40	14.0%
City of Vancouver Funds	\$0.15	0.3%
Property Donations	\$0.05	0.1%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$53.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**NOTE:** The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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#### **LAND USE RATING: Medium**

The land use rating reflects population and employment densities within ½-mile of proposed station areas, as well as the share of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the corridor compared to the share in the surrounding county(ies).

- Average population density across all station areas is 4,598, which corresponds to a medium-low rating according to FTA benchmarks. Total employment served is 30,712, corresponding to a low rating. Parking costs in downtown Vancouver are \$8.50 per day, corresponding to a medium rating.
- The proportion of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the counties through which the project travels is 4.33, which corresponds to a high rating.
- The project will serve downtown Vancouver and a corridor that is largely suburban in character, with small-scale commercial development, some multi-family apartment complexes, and small-lot single family residences, as well as several activity generators.
- Street connectivity is good throughout the corridor. Downtown Vancouver has a continuous street grid network with sidewalks and attractive streetscapes with pedestrian amenities.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-High**

##### **Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-High**

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* A series of successively more focused regional, City, and subarea plans concentrate growth and promote transit-supportive development in the project corridor. The City's comprehensive plan mandates compact urban centers and transit-supportive development regulations for the project corridor, emphasizing enhancement of the pedestrian environment.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* The City of Vancouver's zoning code defines a Transit Overlay District (TOD) that applies in all station areas, allowing maximum densities between 17 and 23 dwelling units per acre in the majority of station areas. The TOD includes streetscape design requirements to enhance the urban, transit-supportive character of new developments.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The State of Washington and the City of Vancouver apply a range of strong incentives to promote transit-supportive development, including tax abatement for multi-family housing, density bonuses, revenue development areas in which taxes are reinvested locally, infrastructure financing, transportation impact fee reductions, streamlined application and expedited permitting processes, environmental clean-up, and housing rehabilitation loans.

##### **Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-High**

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* A range of substantial transit-supportive development projects have been implemented over the last decade and more are under development. Policies and incentives have played a pivotal role in the success of these projects.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* There are numerous opportunities for development in project station areas and the market potential for transit-supportive development appears to be strong. There is evidence of a growing preference for walkable neighborhoods, as reflected in the success of recent transit-supportive development projects, reduced parking ratios for many new development projects in the corridor, and increasing demand for multi-family housing.

##### **Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-High**

- Vancouver has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing affordable housing needs through policies and financial incentives, such as: adoption of a Transit Overlay District, which includes incentives for increased densities; redevelopment of existing housing stock; rental vouchers; use of a multi-family housing tax exemption; and tax abatement and low-income tax credits for developers of low-income housing. Plans for higher-density development, coupled with existing financial incentives, can be expected to further increase the number of affordable housing options.

# Fourth Plain Bus Rapid Transit Project

## Vancouver, Washington - Project Location Map



- Fourth Plain BRT Station
- Fourth Plain BRT Alignment
- ..... Cross-River Bus Shuttle to North Portland and LRT
- Maintenance Facility & Site Improvements
- 1/2 Mile Station Area Boundary
- ★ Key Activity Center
- Cities
- Counties
- Columbia River

